BERKELEY LIBRARY PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

The Christian Century PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

VOLUME 1 | CHICAGO, SEPTEMBER, 1930 | NUMBER 12

IN THIS ISSUE

Alfred Samuel Nickless
Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Detroit
"Life's Quest"

Clovis G. Chappell
First Methodist Church, Houston, Texas
"The Goodness of God"

Christian F. Reisner
Broadway Temple, New York City
"The Christian's Resources"

J. Stuart Holden
St. Paul's Church, Portman Square, London
"The Miracles That Did Not Happen"

James H. Snowden
Editor-in-Chief, The Presbyterian Banner, Pittsburgh
"How Jesus Dealt With John's Doubt"

John Clarence Petrie
First Unitarian Church, Nashville
"What Think Ye of Christ?"

Howard Chandler Robbins
Professor in General Theological Seminary, New York City
"Be Not Anxious"

BERKELEY LIBRARY PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Life's Quest

BY ALFRED SAMUEL NICKLESS

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth. 3 *John* 1:4.

THERE is a certain mood which comes upon us all when we are tempted to ask ourselves questions—just why are we here, anyway, why are we born, and reared, and educated; why do we select this particular business or choose to enter that profession; why is life as it is, wherein we get married, face life's testings, share in its joys, partake of its sorrows, perhaps make some little contribution to the sum total of things, then shuffle off this mortal coil when our time comes, without very much fuss, or anybody giving many sad adieus? And almost before we have shuffled off, someone else has come along, ready to go on where we left off, appearing to fill our place just as well, if not better, and the world goes along pretty much in the same channels as before, and after a very short time it seems as if we have been forgotten, as if we had never lived at all.

If this be our mood, it is well to come back to a word like this. A word which sets a higher value on us than we are tempted to do when in such a mood. If this man Gaius had ever entertained such thoughts, here is a sentence that must have jolted him out of such musings into a finer appreciation of the reason for his being here. To the writer it seems that the highest valuation, that which gives greatest satisfaction—in fact, sets his life coursing with joy inexpressible—is that one be found walking in the truth.

It seems to me if we could hear those speaking to us who have done the most for us in the rich contributions they have made toward our life in home or school, their wishes and prayers would find an echo in these words of old. Two of these words this man must have heard

25 Cents a Copy | Entered as second-class matter October 14, 1929, at Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published monthly by The Christian Century Press, 440 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. | Two Dollars a Year

many times from the lips of the Master as he companioned with him. Joy! Truth! Not that joy which is merely on the surface of things, but that which is deep, abiding, almost inexpressible. It is nothing small that occasions such joy; his expectations and wishes are lifted to the topmost rung. Joy in the presence of a man who is walking the white highway of truth. We are apt to tremble at this word "truth," and almost fight shy of it, thinking of it in relationship to that which is abstract and abstruse, that which has to do with mere external authority, or that which is given to us in some crystalized form, some sum total of things handed down to us in a neat little package, already labeled "ready for use." Not so with this man. To him it was something very tangible, workable, and livable. Truth—"which is the commerce of our minds with reality, the correspondence of our thoughts with things, the bond of society, and the bloom of life, something which we feel to be an indispensable worth to our life, and without which we cannot live, after having visioned it, convinced that we should seek it, accept it and obey it. That which answers to the soul's demands, which enriches and immortalizes life." That is truth.

After all, the soul does not live by vision of bulk, but in the truth as it proceeds from the heart of God, and is worked out into the warp and woof of our everyday life. Truth which is something more than that which is beaten out and condensed for us into creeds, however precious we may regard these; not that which is merely derived from the facts of the world, however worthwhile these facts may be. What knowledge of a father would a child gain merely by observing that which he did? He has to take that for which the father stands and in which he believes, and pass it through the crucible of his own experience. As someone has said, "The truth which is vital is the truth that vitalizes you the moment you believe in it." Of course, it has to do with belief, but belief which is more than one's mere intellectual assent to a given proposition that it is true. There is always a danger that we shall think of truth as a mere intellectual exercise. One is aware that this is no time to belittle the intellect, or to dissuade men from study. "To fear the intellect is to lack faith, for it is to divide life and to divide the soul, and to divide the dominion of God and to divide God himself."

Men of Great Faith

Nevertheless, there are things hid from the wise and prudent, which are revealed unto babes. Aristotle said, "Pure thought alone is ineffectual." There are other avenues. A man may make many valuable contributions to life without knowing everything about electrons, or describing for us the position, size, etc., of the latest planet. It was something more than intellectual power which made Lincoln the great statesman that he was, something more than intellectual ability that made Samuel Johnson preeminent among his friends. A literary critic declares that there was hardly one in Johnson's coterie who was not doing better work, yet he was the greatest man of his age. Something more than intellectual power is making a Gandhi to be the most feared man in all of the British empire; it is the ideals and principles for which he stands. Something more than intellectual power is making a Kagawa the greatest spiritual power in all Japan; out of his twenty years of literally following Christ he has been able to inaugurate what is called a "Kingdom of God" movement, which promises to do more to evangelize Japan than anything else in that land. Yet these are all men of great beliefs, but they are beliefs not held by them in any second-hand fashion, but those which they have thought through and lived through and made the truth of their life.

Belief Is All-Important

We are so often told that it does not matter so much what a man believes so long as he lives rightly. The opposite is true: it does not matter what a man does, so long as he believes rightly. Chesterton suggests this when he says that when he is out looking for rooming quarters he is not going to ask the landlady the price of the room, but what is her attitude toward the universe.

All of this reveals the fact that the truth which is believed is that which is bound to find its expression in life. Dr. Cleland B. McAfee of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Chicago, my own beloved teacher in theology, writes in his latest book, "The Christian Message and Program," that "if Jesus had not lived what he taught he could not have had such tremendous influence. When he thought of God as Father, he lived as though it were true. When he saw men as brothers, he lived a steadily brotherly life with all sorts of people." When he endeavored to show the folly of worry and anxiety, he lived a life of utmost serenity. Jesus believed that right conduct should come out of right thinking.

Was not this the very heart of Ruskin's message as he stood in Venice one day and saw the cathedral in ruins, when he said "someone has been untruthful, somebody has placed lying stones in these walls and foundations." Entering a home, he found people burning up with fever, and he said, "Someone put lying lead in the drainage pipes." One day he saw a great ship dashed on the rocks and a hundred lives lost, and he exclaimed, "Someone has been untruthful, somebody put lying links into the great cables of the anchor chain that ought to have held the ship when the storm came." Rushing into a church one day in the midst of a heavy rain storm, he saw large buckets placed to catch the water as it dripped from the matchless frescoes of Tinteretto, and he said, "Somebody has been untruthful, somebody has placed lying tiles on the roof."

That was a fine tribute which Johnson paid his friend Boswell, "He has no genius, but so true is he that if he promised a man acorns and no acorns grew in England that year, he would go all the way to Denmark to get his acorns rather than break his word."

Tremendous, is it not, that this is how your life and mine is tested. We are hearing a great deal today about "trusteeship"—trusteeship of time, talents, per-

sonality, wealth. L. P. Jacks of Oxford, in his "Constructive Citizenship," has written most skillfully the right word in emphasis of this: "Think then of some person known to you, and such persons are known to most of us, in whose hands you would feel your own interests to be perfectly safe, a person incapable of betraying your trust, or exploiting it to his own advantage, and you have before you the very ideal of citizenship which all methods of education should aim at realizing; no man can be accounted educated unless he

ALFRED SAMUEL NICKLESS

be a man whom his neighbors can trust, not only in the high places of power, but in the very rank and level of industrial activity, in every workshop or office where goods are produced or service exchanged." Difficult, you say; who doubts it? But not to be called impossible until a resolute attempt has been made to train citizenship on those lines—which has not yet been done. It is barely possible that we now have more unapplied truth than we know what to do with.

The Danger in Science

Perhaps you recall, a year or two ago, the storm of censure that came down upon the head of a certain English bishop when he declared before the church congress that the scientists should take a holiday for a few years until the world had caught up with that which has been discovered for it.

If we think this bishop a little too "preacherfied" to suit us, we may be ready to listen to a man like Edwin E. Slosson, Director of Science of Service in Washington, D. C., when he says: "The real danger in the advance of physical science is not theological but ethical, not in the materialism of science, but in the gifts of science. It is the danger arising from the sudden acquisition of power. If, for example, every person in this country should be given thirty slaves to work for him day and night, how would his morals stand the strain? Without considering his treatment of the slaves, what would he do with the wealth, leisure, and freedom of action suddenly bestowed upon him? This is just what has happened in two generations by the utilization of fossil fuel. Man has quadrupled his income by drawing wealth from the coal banks. If a boy wishes to play hookey from school, he can do it at the rate of fifty miles per hour in a high powered car. If a girl wants to dance all night, she can have an orchestra at her disposal by turning on the radio. If a man is disposed to dissipation, he has an extra four hours a day every day, and a two or three day weekend. If a woman is inclined to extravagance and idleness, she has more money and time to waste in that way than a dozen of her foremothers. If a nation wants to go to war, it can kill a million men and destroy a billion dollars worth of property in a year. I do not suppose that men are really any more wicked than they were before the flood, but a stockbroker in control of an indispensable commodity can wreak more ruin in a moment of careless or evil impulse than a criminal of the ancient world could in a lifetime."

All this reveals the potentialities for good or ill of that which is now in our possession, showing to us the necessity of our walking along the great white way of truth, with high purpose and consecrated determination, not being afraid to make the aim of our life the quest after truth, with souls that are responsive, and minds that are open to every invasion from the Infinite.

The Curse of Soul-Blindness

Professor Goldwin Smith, years ago, wrote a book entitled, "No Refuge but in Truth." Professor Smith had just come from Great Britain to Canada where a very old type of conservatism was in vogue. He saw the danger that arose from a certain blindness to the movement of the times, hence his book, written to entreat people to face the facts of life, its growing knowledge, its changing aspect of things, and to resist the temptation which is so easy for all of us to fall into of taking shelter in our systems, our dogmas, our formulas, and erecting them as barriers against the truth. Oh, if men had only done this down through the centuries, there might have been no Smithfield fires, no Spanish Inquisition. What if many were only following in the succession of Professor Smith today! How free we should be from that which cramps and hinders in the churches, and converts them into warring camps and clashing sects, hindering them from leading the people of our world into the liberty and privileges of the gospel of God, as it is revealed for us in Jesus Christ.

Is it any wonder that our Master did not call the little band of men which he gathered around him Christians, but learners and disciples? Oh, for the open mind and responsive soul today. To be able on our part to do as Huxley suggested—"Sit down before

the facts of life as little children," and to know something of the spirit of a Whittier who wrote:

> The shadows fall apart,
> And so the west winds play;
> And all the windows of my heart
> I open to the day.

But along with the open mind and responsive soul must there be found the moral energy in you and me to translate in the actions of everyday life that which we have discovered in our quest.

There is a saying that "truth seldom goes without a scratched face," meaning, we suppose, that we not only have to pay a great price in attaining it, but also a great price in giving expression to it after we have found it. Men who are walking in truth today are far from the cushioned life of ease; they are out in the thick of life, whether in the laboratories or beating a pathway to the poles, flying thousands of feet above the clouds, pouring out their life on some neglected frontier of life today, or in some congested areas of our great cities. But always taking the high line, the right line, the only line, no matter what it may cost them, giving clearest and most fearless expression to the truth of Arnold's words:

> Rigorous teachers trained my youth,
> And trimmed the lamp, and fed the fire,
> Showed me the high white star of truth,
> There back I came and there aspire . . .
> E'en lost upon the cold green mantling sea,
> I cling with truth alone to the last spar, both cast away,
> And one must perish, let it not be he
> Whom I have sworn to obey.

Thank God for all who have envisioned truth in this way and have fearlessly followed its beckonings, not holding their lives dear unto themselves. From Abraham to Paul, and from Paul to Gandhi in his prison house yonder in India, today their voices come to us like the voice of many waters.

> Keep right on, fight well the fight,
> A cloud of witnesses around
> Hold thee in full survey.
> Forget the steps already trod
> And onward urge thy way.

Above all, there is the voice of One who is the clearest revelation of the truth, for the truth becomes personalized in him. Nothing does he impose upon us, nor force us to accept. "The authority to which he appealed," says one, "was the instinct for truth in the human heart." He did not say, as the church has so often said, "Believe this or perish." He said, "Search your hearts and see if what I said is not true; do it and the truth shall make you free." No wonder that Goethe should say about him: "Let intellectual and spiritual culture progress and the human mind expand as much as it will; beyond the grandeur and the moral elevation of Christianity, as it sparkles and shines in the gospels, the human mind will not advance." With a voice that is winsomely appealing and all compelling does he say, "Follow me."

There is much in Browning which has always baffled me, and among many of his puzzling lines, these lines, until I came to write on this theme, have puzzled me most:

> I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ,
> Accepted by the reason, solves for thee
> All questions in the earth and out of it,
> And has so far advanced thee to be wise.

And here is the answer. Christ is the goal of life's quest, the soul's richest and most abiding satisfaction. May we wait before him, seeking the spirit's empowerment and enrichment, so that day by day we shall be led to walk in all truth.

The Goodness of God

By Clovis G. Chappell

O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. Psalm 34:3.

THIS sunny singer has a wooing word upon his lips. He is not abusive. He is not undertaking to prod us. He is not setting himself to the task of driving us out to church. He is resolved that he himself will go. He is bent upon having a praise service. In fact, the giving of thanks is to be henceforth a fixed habit with him. Every day is to be a thanksgiving day. "I will bless the Lord at all times," he sings happily. "His praise shall continually be in my mouth." He is eager that we share his gratitude, so he knocks on our doors, lays eager hands upon us and says winsomely, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."

I

Why is this man so full of gratitude? Why is it that for him to open his mouth is to burst forth into spontaneous praise? It is not because his circumstances are perfect. This Psalm is thought by some to have been written by David while he was in hiding from Saul. But whether this is the case or not, the author, whoever he is, faces the fact that circumstances are often against us. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," he tells us frankly. He is wise enough to know that if we wait till everything is perfectly to our liking before we give thanks, then we are likely to wait forever. Do you remember that wonderful palace of which we read in the Arabian Nights? It was a veritable dream of loveliness. The owner was naturally exceedingly proud of it. One day he was showing its marvelous wealth and beauty to a friend. When this friend had looked it over, he said: "Yes, it is wonderful, it is almost perfect. All that is needed is a roc's egg to swing from the ceiling." But the owner of the palace did not know what a roc was, nor did he know that it laid eggs. Naturally he did not know where its eggs were if it did lay. So his friend left him in wretchedness and bitter discontent. His palace was little better than a

prison without a roc's egg to swing from the ceiling and thus make it perfect.

Nor is this man grateful because of any goodness or greatness he sees in himself. He is boasting, but he is not boasting of his own achievements. We do not like boasting that is born of self-importance. Such boasting is bad taste. It is a mark of conceit. It is thoroughly offensive. But not so the boasting of this radiant singer. "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord." I could wish that we had a congregation

Clovis G. Chappell

made up of such boasters. I could wish that we might have a city full of them. I could wish that we might have a world of them. Such boasters do not offend, they delight. They do not make us sad, they make us glad. "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof and be glad." Certainly, because the humble, being poor in spirit, know that if there is to be any amazing worth in themselves it is to come from God. Therefore, when they hear one as weak as themselves boasting in the Lord, they take heart. They rejoice with a glad hopefulness and expectancy.

Gratitude Out of Experience

What, then, is the secret of the gratitude of this singer? First, because his gratitude is born of his own personal experience. He claims that he has been a seeker after God. "I sought the Lord," he tells us, with beautiful candor. He has been an explorer, an investigator in the realm of the spiritual. What has he found? He ought to be especially fitted to speak to this age that is so scientifically minded. We are concerned with facts; so is this seeker after God. Having sought, he reports his findings. I think we may listen to him with confidence. We may listen with the conviction that discoveries in the realm of the spiritual are no less valid than discoveries in the realm of the material. Having tested by experience, he has a right to speak. And mark you, it is only such who can speak with authority. This is true in every field of knowledge.

Suppose, now that Commander Byrd has returned to the United States, he should make statements about the South pole and its environs that I should feel disposed to dispute, who would take me seriously? Men would say: "This brave explorer has ventured his life to see and to map the country of which he speaks. He has been there, while this preacher has never been beyond the equator." Therefore, I should be utterly discredited, and rightly so. But when some atheistic scientist or philosopher undertakes to speak on matters of religion, we often take him seriously, even though he has confessedly never been earnest enough to test by experience that of which he speaks. The wisest scholar in the world who has lived his life in willful ignorance of God has no more right to a hearing on the validity of our faith than has a mole on the reality and beauty of the sunrise.

Delivery from Fear

"I sought the Lord," says this sunny psalmist. Then what came of it? This is his confident answer: "He heard me and delivered me from all my fears." What a declaration! He had his fears, that is no doubt the reason he began to seek. We seldom seek with seriousness till we get desperate. He was beset by tormenting terrors. He does not tell us that of which he was afraid. He may have been afraid of the loss of his wealth or of his health or of one dearly loved. He may have been afraid of the sins of his youth. He may have been afraid of some foul habit that had taken him captive and bound him hand and foot. He may have been afraid of death or of that which might lie beyond death. But whatever his fears, they were making his blood run cold as they closed about him like wolves about a belated traveler at eventide. Besides, he seemed utterly alone. As far as the eye could see there was no promise of help. But, at last, in sheer desperation he flung an empty, seeking hand out into the gloom, and, lo, that hand was gripped and held fast. He realized that he was no longer alone, but that a Friend was at his side, a Friend whose presence made these ghastly foes to vanish and brought in their place a sweet sense of security and peace. And joyous of heart and radiant of face he gave this testimony: "He delivered me from all my fears."

And, second, this psalmist was grateful for what God had done for others as well as for himself. For instance, he had a friend with whom he was accustomed to share his spiritual experiences. That friend had been overwhelmed by a veritable avalanche of trouble. One disaster after another had come upon the poor fellow till it seemed that he had been cheated of all that makes life worth living. In fact, he was

so beaten down and trodden under foot by this besieging army of troubles that he was no longer able to pray. He could not put his agony into words. He could not voice the tragic needs of his perplexed soul. What did he do in this desperate plight? He just cried, cried unto the Lord, and the outcome of that pathetic cry was this: "The Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles."

But this singer had other friends whose faces had for some reason lost their radiance and had come to wear the ugly mantle of a settled gloom. There were some, probably, whose faces were darkened by constant worry and care. There were some with peevish and fretful faces. There were envious faces and faces black with the hell of hate. There were sensual faces over which the cloven-footed demons of impurity had walked, leaving their ugly tracks at every step. There were sad faces, faces darkened by sorrow and wet with tears. But to all these a marvelous change had come; the gloom and the night had passed and a glorious dawn had transfigured them. So with gratitude he sings: "They looked unto him and became radiant."

Learning of God Most Important

Then this psalmist is grateful for what these experiences have taught him of God. He has learned of God at first hand, he has learned also from other saints. They have shared experiences. That is always helpful. The loss of the testimony meeting is no mean loss. It is ever a benediction for those who fear the Lord to speak one with another. Out of this sharing of experiences, above all, out of his own personal dealing with God, there had come to this ancient saint certain first-hand knowledge of God that filled his soul with grateful gladness. He knew God through experience. This is the crying need of our own day and of every day.

As a country school teacher, far in the backwoods, I boarded in the home of a woman who was one of the choicest saints that it has ever been my privilege to know. I had known her in the years when she was a most commonplace, halting church member. I knew her also after she had passed through a wonderful religious experience. Every morning, when the duties of her housekeeping had been finished, she would take her Bible and retire into a little room that was all her own. Sometimes she would be gone only a very few minutes, sometimes for more than an hour. But when she came forth there always looked out from her eyes "the peace of a great discovery." My own faith, which was none too strong, was greatly strengthened by the fact that she "looked unto him and was radiant." That radiance has been an abiding benediction through the years.

II

Now what had this psalmist learned? Of what was he sure? Speaking out of his own heart-knowledge of God he could say this: God is good.

To many today it seems trite to say that God is good, yet no discovery could be more gladsome. Nor could any be more revolutionary when we consider the spiritual darkness that abounded when this discovery was made. Think of the gods, cruel and lustful, of the surrounding nations. Think of the false conceptions of God that were prevalent in Israel. Think of your own conception of God. There are many experiences through which we pass even now, after Jesus has come to reveal God, that make belief in the goodness of God exceedingly difficult. But this man, in spite of his environment, in spite of the fact that he had known suffering and heartache, was absolutely sure that God is good.

He had discovered, too, that God is near. That, too, is a marvelous discovery. How distant we often feel he is as we stagger under our burden of weariness and loneliness. But this man had come to realize that God is always near, that he is constantly round about us, that he is forever within the hearing of our voices and within reach of our groping hands. This is true amidst all circumstances of our lives. It is especially true when the skies grow gray and the road stony. Listen how tenderly he puts it: "The Lord is near unto them that are of a broken heart."

God Is Sufficient

Finally, the psalmist has discovered that God is always adequate. "I have constantly found him sufficient," he says joyously. He has never failed me, he has never once let me down. When all other sources of help have failed, I have found him abundantly adequate for every need." As he sings his song, he can hear the lions down the mountainside as they growl and snare in search of their prey. In spite of the fact that they are king of beasts, they are hungry. They are in want. Then with winsome audacity he sets their snarls to music as he sings "the young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good."

If David is the author of this Psalm, he wrote it when he was a young man. He had not then had the vast experience of life that came to him through the years. But what did he have to say when youth had gone and when songful summer had changed into bleak winter? This was a song of the Maytime. What did he say amid the chills of December? He sang even more thrillingly of the sufficiency of God: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." And this is the verdict of all the saints. "When I sent you forth without purse and without script," Jesus asked of his disciples, "lacked ye anything?" And they answered, "Nothing." "He is always like that," says this psalmist. "He is always like that," declare those through all the centuries who have really put him to the test. They have reached this common conclusion: "My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

III

"Now that is all well enough for this ancient saint," one says half angrily, "but he knew nothing of my situation. He did not live in this bewildering age when one support after another that we counted as

secure has been knocked from under us. Assuming that he found all this in God, of what value is it to me? Certainly I would give the world for such a gloriously radiant faith, but how may I find it? Who can put me on the road that leads to this desired goal? And this psalmist believes that he is equal to this high task. He is confident that there is a road to certainty, that what he has found, all may find. And this is his direction, "Taste and see. Give God a chance, and you, too, will know that he is good, that he is infinitely near, that he is always sufficient."

Our Lord is abidingly eager to submit himself to the test of experience. Does he really hear prayer? There is only one way to be sure of it. Try him. Is he able to give strength in temptation? Try him. Can he really give victory over sin? Try him. Does he really comfort in sorrow? Try him. Does he indeed make all things new? Taste and see. Those who have tried him have found him sufficient. When Dr. J. H. Jowett was on his death bed, he wrote to a fellow minister who also was suffering. He wrote out of a rich personal experience. He had in some measure tested the sufficiency of Jesus for hours of stress and strain and difficulty. Among other things he wrote this fine, gracing word: "We have preached a great gospel, but remember that Jesus Christ is greater than anything we have ever said about him." This princely preacher has spoken grandly of Jesus, but he found that the half had not, and could not, be put into words. There is only one way to know and that is by experience. So I close with this appeal from this ancient saint, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

The Christian's Resources

By Christian F. Reisner

All things are yours. 1 *Corinthians* 3:21.

A CRUDE local preacher accompanied John Wesley to dinner in the home of a wealthy sympathizer of his work and noticing that the daughter wore a beautiful ring, which was contrary to the early teachings of the Wesleyanites, he seized her hand and held it up, for the purpose of bringing censure on her. He asked, "What do you think of this hand?" Promptly, Mr. Wesley averted controversy by replying, "That is a very beautiful hand." Even in his day Mr. Wesley knew how to apply mere rules.

The Methodist discipline explicitly exhorts against the wearing of jewelry. In the memory of some of us we were not allowed to read novels. In certain sections ministers and religious leaders still completely avoid the "movies." Many "believers" prohibit the theater. Texas has a law against card playing: dominoes alone can be substituted. A vast multitude still look upon isolated religionists, such as "nuns" and "monks," as peculiarly holy. They forget that Jesus said of John the Baptist, who lived in the wilderness on locusts and wild honey, that the "least" in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he.

Not a nun, but a mother, illustrates the highest type of womanhood. We are to be *in* the world, though not of it. It is foolish to conclude that anything about us belongs by right to Satan.

Once it was affirmed that ministers were peculiarly called to their work. That is not biblical. Every man and woman is assigned to his or her task by the same Father God.

Three stone masons were working on a great cathedral. An inquisitive bystander addressed each one of them in order, with the query, "What are you doing?" The first reply was "Can't you see, I am cutting stone." The second answered, "Don't you understand, I am working for so much per day." But the third, when questioned, lifted his eyes to the slowly rising walls of the beautiful cathedral, and with a triumphal note in his voice said, "I am building a cathedral." All of our work can glorify God, as it helps to make the world a better place in which to live.

Birds are no longer found in New York harbor. They were accustomed to fly down into the water and pick up various kinds of food. But lately vessels have been burning oil and the water is covered with it. When they alighted the oil soaked into their feathers and they could not fly again. We must beware lest worldliness spoil our soaring ability.

Goodness is only another word for efficiency. It is running the body according to the plans and program of the Creator, and thus getting the most out of it. Sacrifice is a part of life's program, as diet is to preserve full orbed health. Jesus came that we might have life and that more abundantly. His program shows us how to get the most out of this earth in happiness and growth and thus to become so valuable that death cannot injure us. Hence, Paul stresses the fact that the believer owns all things.

All Truth Is for the Christian

Truth is ours. Paul was a great believer in systematic doctrine and in formal statements of belief. He wrote the book of Romans which contains a complete system of Christian theology. In fact, some scholars, insist that Paul, and not Jesus, founded the Christian church. He systematically visited all the churches and tested out their forms of belief. He carried out his practical system further by sending a slave home to his Master. He told the tattling women to stay at home and tend to their own business. He might illustrate the Presbyterians, who have their own Westminster confession of faith, and who have been pretty strenuous in enforcing orthodoxy. Peter was a ritualist. He constantly broke with Paul by insisting that Jewish converts should follow circumcision and all the old Jewish church forms. He worked closely with the organization at Jerusalem. He might

be identified at least partially as one of the Episcopalians, with their beautiful and helpful ritual and forms. Apollos was an orator and naturally appealed to the emotions. He would probably sway the crowd with his language, his pictures and his appeals to their inner feelings. He might be styled a Methodist. These playful designations are employed to enforce the fact that when any denomination finds a truth, a method or a program that will advance the kingdom of God, it belongs to all the rest of the believers. We do not therefore waste our time with or boast over superior methods or statements of truths. We copyright nothing, for "truth" belongs to all believers.

When the fight against "higher" criticism waged fiercely, an extreme conservative one day read from one book and then a similar statement from another book, and promptly identified the first as the words of "Tom" Paine and the other as the words of a higher critic. He then gloated much over thus proving that the latter was a heretic. This method proved nothing, for even the devil might state a truth, and we be able and eager to adopt it. The spirit is to "guide us into all truth." Hence the believer is equipped to recognize truth as an artist can recognize a painting, or a musician a harmonious production, or a lapidary a gem among stones.

John Caird well said: "It is a fine thing to have all the books of a helpful author and be able to read them with understanding, but it is vastly better to have his mind so that we can see and think them ourselves." The Spirit inspires us and enables us to do just that.

Science is the handmaiden of religion, all of its discoveries belong to us. None of them undermine God. The old-time workers in this field were devout believers. President Butler of Columbia university recently told me that he had interviewed all of his science teachers and that they all agreed that they could not work without positing a personal God. Eddington, one of the greatest recent authorities, while he denies many other Christian beliefs still insists that he must have a personal God. Einstein does practically the same thing.

Science and Religion

Every individual has a thyroid gland. They tell us that if this gland is starved it affects injuriously the heart, the nerves and the mind. Scientific workers are discovering methods of feeding this gland and find that then quite naturally and logically the heart, mind, and nerves function properly. Likewise man has a spiritual nature, and if that is not fed regularly he will be muddy in thinking, unsteady in habits and failing in courage. Only when the spiritual is nourished will he appropriate all truths so that he becomes well poised and efficient.

The world belongs to the Christian. The Greek word which is translated "world" means the physical and the material about us. Therefore, money is ours. Heaven's streets are said to be paved with gold—and gold is safe when underfoot, to lift us up and to make life's pathways easier. But it is dangerous when gold is made the crowning goal of achievement for then it crowds out the best in us. A study of the original will reveal the fact that Jesus did not tell the rich young man to go and sell all that he had and give it away in a lump. But rather he exhorted him to get his possessions in hand and to give them out bit by bit as he was actuated by the spirit of Jesus and followed his program.

Swift once wrote to Bolingbroke, "The fool is the one who keeps his money in his heart instead of his head." Kingsley prayed, "Lord, give me a getting hand and a giving heart." Wesley, at the start, lived on $135 a year. He consecrated himself to continue that budget throughout his whole life, and thus he made and gave away during his lifetime more than $100,000, which would equal more than $1,000,000 today.

A young man accepted for the African missionary field reported at New York for "passage," but found on further examination that his wife could not stand the climate. He was heart-broken, but he prayerfully returned to his home and determined to make all the money he could to be used in spreading the kingdom of God over the world. His father, a dentist, had started to make, on the side, an unfermented wine for the communion service. The young man took the business over and developed it until it assumed vast proportions—his name was "Welch," whose family still manufactures "grape-juice." He gave literally hundreds of thousands of dollars to the work of missions.

True Stewardship

Two brothers in New York went into partnership as bankers. One promised God that when he had made $100,000, he would retire and give the rest of his life to Sunday school work. He did so and thus became one of the greatest Sunday school workers in America. He was the author of many books on the Sunday school, and acted as the moving spirit in the World Sunday School association, becoming its general secretary. He influenced dozens of young people to go into Christian work, his own daughter now being the wife of a minister, and led thousands of boys and girls to give their lives to Christ. He did not leave much money when he died. His brother continued to give all his time to the banking business, but all he left was $7,000,000. Who served the world and left the largest heritage?

Recently Miss Olive Jones, former president of the National Education association, and one of the real women leaders in America, met Christ and experienced an old-fashioned conversion. She immediately gave up her outside work and took entire charge of the twenty odd volunteer workers who gave all their time to the work of Calvary Protestant Episcopal church. She donates her rare executive ability with great efficiency, because she has sufficient income to do so.

While conducting a life service appeal at an Epworth League institute, I found groups of young people at the altar, who were volunteering as deaconesses, missionaries and ministers. I saw another hungry-

eyed group in the audience. I made a proposition: "How many of you folks will come to the altar and dedicate yourselves to make all the money you can and to live on as little as you expect these workers to do and give the rest to the advancement of the kingdom?" Thirty-two of them came to the front and thus dedicated themselves. That is the kind of appeal we must make to disciples if the church is to

CHRISTIAN F. REISNER

be properly financed and "giving" is put on a worthy plane.

An associate chief justice of Colorado, years ago, told me that a vast rental had been offered for the finest location in the city. But he added: "They want to open a saloon and my mother taught me to hate the liquor traffic and therefore they do not have enough money to hire it." The celebrated resorts, Minnewaska and Mohawk, were at the beginning drinking resorts. The twin brothers, Smiley, who were devout Quakers, took the two properties over and determined to run them as dry hotels, where family prayers would be regularly held, and all things vetoed by the church would be excluded. Since that time these two places have been a perennial fountain of blessing for scores of Christians and kingdom building organizations. Such stewardship of property helps to bring in the kingdom.

A Boston business man regularly took to his beautiful home six or eight young men for Sunday dinner and then, the warm atmosphere created, told them about Christ and won many of them to him. Property can be dedicated to the work of the kingdom in a myriad of ways.

Business is ours. An owner of vast forests, who had been turning them into lumber, retired from business so that he could take life easy. But just about that time he dropped into an old-fashioned country church revival and went to the altar and there found a rich blessing. With it came the message: "Go back into business and make all the money you can for the work of the kingdom." He did so, and many notable movements were founded and maintained by his money during his lifetime.

A Great Christian Merchant

John Wanamaker was originally a Y. M. C. A. secretary, but received a clear call from God to go into business and illustrate honesty in commercial transactions. He transformed the mercantile methods of this country with his "one price" rule. He further employed these same talents by retaining the leadership of a big Sunday school. He even returned regularly every week from Washington while he was postmaster general to run his school. When past seventy years of age, while on a vacation, he spent one hundreds hours in writing personal postcards to every member of his Men's Bible class.

I once heard the president of one of America's greatest corporations tell the following story: "I was peddling our produce with horse and wagon, and on Thursday morning said, 'Unless I can do better today, and the rest of the week we shall be bankrupt by Saturday night.' Thursday was the worst day I had had, and coming home I repeated the prediction of failure, when out of the very air seemed to come a voice saying, 'You are failing because you have not taken Me into partnership.' I answered back, 'All right, my Father, from this moment you shall be a partner in the firm.'" This distinguished leader then assured a great audience that from that moment prosperity came and continued. That man holds national offices in Sunday school work, and in his own denomination has given thousands of dollars to religious causes and more than one-third of his time to the work of the church and affiliated causes. When Christ is the silent partner, there is no limit to one's usefulness in the business field.

The field of politics is ours. Who can get the vision of a possible brotherhood in this world so well as a follower of Jesus, the great Elder Brother of humanity? Archbishop Ryan once said, "Who can better understand man than he who was a toiler at the carpenter's bench, and was later crowned at the right hand of God?" Roosevelt, at the beginning of his political career, said: "I mean to enter politics and show that it is possible to be a success at it while keeping clean in life and method." What a wonderful demonstration he gave the world!

Grandeur from Humble Materials

A humble blacksmith who was president of my Epworth league in Kansas City decided to enter the politics of his labor union. He first became its secretary and afterwards its outstanding president. By his leadership and influence, he changed the attitude of

this union towards prohibition and made them advocates and transformed the habits of scores of the men by his example, personality and teaching. He constantly testified as a Christian and stood out before them as a true disciple of Jesus.

Frances Willard, as a girl shut away on the farm, to which her father was compelled to move on account of tuberculosis, declared, "Some day I am sure God means for me to be of great use in the world." Following that call she not only pinned white ribbons on women everywhere, but she talked and worked for woman suffrage and helped bring in the day when women could vote.

A beautiful cathedral was about to be dedicated, when suddenly the builders discovered that a window had not been furnished for a small opening on the east side of the building. An old man had been observed wandering about the building for many days. Hearing the discussion, he came up timidly to offer a window which he had built, and partially to humor him it was decided to install it temporarily. The great preacher arose the following morning and announced the text for his dedicatory sermon. He lifted his eyes and suddenly saw that the sun was delineating a marvelous portrait of Jesus through the window which the aged man had furnished. Inspired by the "vision," the preacher laid aside his manuscript and instead in a thrilling way told the story of the "figure" he there beheld. The old man had gathered up bits of glass left over from other windows about the building and had taken them home and worked out, with them, his love-lit vision of Jesus. That is what we are to do with the world. We are to use its materials for the purpose of building a personality through which can shine the winsome and magnetic beauty of the Man of Galilee.

Life is ours. Jesus was assailed as a friend of publicans and sinners because he fellowshipped so generally with people. He purposed to put his life alongside of mankind so that coming in contact with them he might lift them.

This Good World

When I was a boy, all the Sunday school books depicted the "good" as dying early. Hence few young folks were "attracted." A Sunday school superintendent once asked a group of boys if they wanted to go to heaven. All but one answered him affirmatively. Addressing him he asked, "Johnny, don't you want to go to heaven?" The prompt reply came back, "No, not yet." I sympathize with that boy. Why should he want to leave this world? It is a wonderful place.

Joy is ours. David prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy Salvation. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Jesus said, "I am come that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full." The joy of the Lord is to be our strength. The most hilarious social function of the Jews was a wedding feast. Jesus went there to add by his gracious presence an approval of the occasion as well as to increase its pleasures. When the refreshments ran short, either because of an unusual crowd or poverty, the Master used knowledge of a new power to save the day and increase the joy. Happiness is a product of goodness.

Beauty is ours. Jesus wore a coat of such matchless color and texture that the soldiers forgot about his death agony and gambled for it at his feet. John the Baptist lived in the wilderness, but Jesus wandered in the forest veined with running brooks, anthemed by singing birds, perfumed by various colored flowers, and mellowed by the soft breezes that rustled the leaves into infinite music. The greatest artists have not only received their inspiration from Christ but have made their notable productions cluster around the incidents in the Bible and in his life.

The Good Gift of Love

Love is ours. When my son was small he lived every possible moment with me. Once an old lady, quoting an ancient heresy said, "If you do not look out, God will take that boy away from you, you love him too much." I immediately announced that if I believed in such a God I would immediately cease preaching and denounce him as a fiend. Jesus taught us to love even our enemies, because that task being difficult would insure the exercise that develops the power of love. He went so far as to say that if we did not love our brother whom we could see, how could we love the unseen God! The easiest time to win young people to Christ is when they are freshly in love with each other at the marriage hour. Scores of couples whom I have married have at that time been won to the church.

Three daughters of a humble Wesleyan Methodist preacher became mothers of three most conspicuous men in recent English history. One was Burne-Jones, the artist; the other was Rudyard Kipling, the poet; the third was Stanley Baldwin, former premier of Great Britain. The home life of these parsonage girls taught them the purity and beauty of love as well as the power of intelligence, and merging these two they became ideal mothers.

Energy is ours. Politics commands applause and enthusiasm without criticism. But we are warned to minimize emotionalism in religion. Jesus warms our hearts and stirs our natures and then sends us out to venturesome activities. When Pentecost was over, the believers visited from "house to house" to fearlessly and gladly tell the "story." Paul traveled over the whole world and declared it was good to be "zealously affected always in a good thing." Do not fear the flow and thrill and strength of "life," for it too belongs to the Christian.

I remember in my boyhood seeing choruses gathered from twenty-five towns contiguous to Kansas City. They rendered prize selections as individual choruses. Then they were all gathered into one mighty group to render the Hallelujah chorus of the "Messiah." Each voice was merged into one great acclaim to crown Jesus as king. That is the purpose of life. We are to employ all our talents and strength in glorify-

ing the Father as should his sons and daughters, each in his place and way.

The Victory of Faith

Death is ours. Jesus alone arose from the dead. He has promised, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Grenfell, of North pole reputation, recounts an experience where the ice broke through and dropped him into the water. He clambered upon a cake of ice with nothing on but underwear and a football suit. Some of the dogs climbed up with him. He killed a few and wrapped their bloody skins about him and then tied bones together and put a white rag on top of this improvised staff. Then he gathered the warm living dogs about him and while the cake of ice floated out into the sea, he lay down and went to sleep among the dogs, not caring whether he awoke in this world or the next. That is the victory that overcomes fear, even our faith.

Bishop Warren, when sick unto death, crept to his window in University park and first waving his hands at the beautiful garden which he had seen come up out of a sandy desert, said, "Good-bye, dear old bushes and trees." Then he raised his eyes to the Iliff School of Theology, which he had built by traveling over the country gathering dollars from all kinds of people, and said, "Good-bye, dear old Iliff." Then he waved his hand to the Rocky mountains, stretching out before him with their white capes, and said, "Good-bye, dear old Rockies." Then he lay down and went to sleep and was not, for God took him.

"Things present" are ours, with all their harassing problems. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally," is a cashable promise. Worry is impossible when Christ is our leader.

The world is wide
In time and tide
And God is Guide,
  Then do not hurry.

That man is blest
Who does his best
And leaves the rest,
  Then do not worry.

I hold in my hand a watch made in Switzerland. They tell me that all the separate parts of that watch are made in different villages. They are then assem-

A Pastoral Prayer

By Peter Ainslie, *Minister, the Christian Temple, Baltimore*

O GOD of patience and courage, we adore Thee for Thy goodness and mercy to us. Everywhere we see evidences of Thy reality. The patience and courage manifested by others and which we feel within ourselves are tokens of Thy working. Thy Spirit gropes among the miseries and sensualities of our weary world, seeking to open our eyes and to woo our hearts so that through us Thou mayest make evident to all eyes that Thy kingdom is indeed being realized among mankind.

Thy patience reminds us that we are precious in Thy sight. There must be in our humanity more than we see, as there is in Thyself more than we know. Save us from censorious criticism of others, knowing that Thou art seeking to make Thyself as real in them as in us. Give us the courage to be a shield to those who are attacked and a guard to those who stand in a shadow. Make us to know that even angels cannot minister among us so well as we can minister to each other. We pray for the mind of Christ to reign in us in order that Thy will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Keep us sensitive to the promptings of patience, and courage, so that we may faithfully plant and be willing to wait for the harvest. If the harvest be delayed may we not become impatient, but keep on working in trust that Thou also workest toward its fulfillment. May we go to our daily tasks as we go to prayer and find the holiness of worship in all that we do.

Give us such insight into Thy will that Thy choices for us may never irritate us. May we so use what we have that Thou wilt not withhold from us what we need. Help us to look for Thee within ourselves more than in the things around us; likewise may we look for Thee in others rather than seek out those faults that disfigure others. Give us a finer sensibility that we may be more grateful, both to Thee and to those who are helping Thee. Teach us to feel within ourselves those ties of kinship that make us members of the great human family, of which Thou art Father.

Then we shall become childlike, both in our understanding and our service. Give us grace readily to forgive every wrong, to hesitate in no act of courage, to maintain patience under every provocation, and to test by Thy Spirit what is said and done. May we not be afraid to go beyond where we are. May the trackless world have no fears for us. May our failures never drive us away from tasks that require time and sacrifice. Fortify us with the same spirit of patience and courage that led our Savior to the cross. May we thereby find fellowship with Him in the consciousness that Thy will is being done in us as it was done in Him.

Then, as children of the Father we shall bear the true likeness of Thyself and shall continue to go forth to make our Father's world more fit for our Father's children. And to Thee we shall give all the praise through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

bled, and they fit together exactly because they have been built according to pattern. Do you not believe that the good God can so relate us to our tasks and to our fellows that our lives shall flow smoothly and always forward? Looking in the back of the watch you will see that wheels run every which way, but in the front the hands go straight on around. So may it be with our activities if we are Christ-led.

Tennyson was once asked what he thought of Jesus. He stopped a moment, caught a rose in his finger, shook out its beauty, caught its fragrance, and then said: "What the sun is to that rose, that Jesus Christ is to my soul." So if we become Christ's by simple love, by honest obedience, by restful trust, "all things are ours." We are equipped to pick out of the world what we need to build a Christlike personality, just as the acorn is to pick out of the soil what it needs to make an oak, or a rose bush what it needs to make a fragrant blossom.

The Miracles That Did Not Happen

By J. Stuart Holden

He himself knew what he would do. John 6:6.
He could do there no mighty work. Mark 6:5.
How often would I have gathered thy children together. Matthew 23:37.

THERE are many things men need to find in the services of the Christian church if they are to go away from them, back to their life and work in the world, freshly endued for inevitable conflict, for the strain of endurance and for essential Christian witness. It must at once be confessed that few services, whether plain in their puritanism or ornate in their ritual, can supply them all. But, even so, that service is an entire failure in which Christ is not so declared and revealed to the heart and mind and will of the worshipers, in winsome and convincing persuasiveness, as to put new life into them by strengthening their convictions, correcting their misconceptions, renewing their enthusiasms, opening up to them new vistas of possibility, encouraging their faith with some authentic interpretation of their experience, adding sunlight to daylight, making the sad happy and the happy happier. For the Christian pulpit, like Bunyan's House Beautiful, is erected by the wayside. Wayfarers and pilgrims of all sorts pause, and listen, and pass by, either helped or hindered, uplifted or depressed, gladdened or made contemptuous, by its message.

Of course, it sounds like sheer madness that it should "please God by the foolishness of preaching" (which is something altogether different from foolish preaching!) "to save them that believe"; that is, by a method which in itself seems to be so improbable of high result, so unlikely to lift men clean above the destructive tendencies of their unrenewed nature into the lofty purposes of his love and wisdom. Yet so it is! And the entire history of the Christian church attests that in this, as in all things else, God's methods do not miscarry. Upon the pulpit rests the responsibility of declaring, in its thousand-fold legitimate variety, the open secret of all strong, worthy, convincing Christian life.

And this is nothing less than the presence of the living Christ with those who respond to his overtures, enter into fellowship with his aims, and dedicate the loyalty of their lives to his obedience. For this is, and always has been, the enduement and competence of his disciples and friends in every age. No cross winds can blow out the lamp which lightens their darkness and enables them to hold firm to the track of his feet amid the perplexing and tortuous ways of the world through which their pilgrimage and in which their mission lies. The charter of their liberties and the inspiration of their humble confidence is his unqualified assurance, "Lo, I am with you all the days."

I.

When we think of the historic Christ, of the life he lived among men, and of his revelation of God to them, it is almost instinctively in terms of miracle that we find ourselves visualizing him. For, from the records of his life there blaze forth again and again, with arresting brightness, simple but convincing accounts of altogether miraculous doings. In contingencies which, taken together, cover wide areas of human experience and need, he was accustomed, without any announcement, to traverse the ordinary laws of nature, to suspend their operation, to set aside their inevitableness, or to interpose other laws which, for the occasion, entirely canceled them. And this he did in the manner of one who was himself beyond the reach of them all, as one who was not bound in any sense by them, as one who possessed ampler knowledge than was then, or is now, defined in any connotation of what, with our finite understanding, we call law.

Nothing is more impressive than the fact that he did this quite naturally, in no sense theatrically. He had no purpose of attracting attention to himself. As witness, indeed, his prohibition of any report in respect of some of his most beneficent works. He did not even seek by means of miracle to confirm before an unbelieving world his declared relationship with God. His aim was plainly rather to help men realize that God was in the midst of their human lives. He sought to make it plain to them that his power was available for the relief of their necessities. He labored to convince them that the material is never the true nor the final value in any issue.

The Purpose of Miracles

The miracles of Jesus were just effective ways of showing God to men in relationship to their common and recurrent needs, to their hunger and sickness, their

fears and strengthlessness, their defilement and despair. And they served, as nothing else could have done, to make God a really felt and calculable presence in the home, the temple, the countryside, the city, on the sea, in every variety of circumstance and emergency. And that to every class in the community, alike to the rich, the poor, the young, the strong and vigorous, the convention-bound, the sorrow-stricken, the fear-haunted. It was his aim to convince men that they lived in a heaven-invaded world, in other words, that

J. Stuart Holden

they could actually count on God. He summoned them to that higher allegiance in which they would find not only rest unto their souls but a vocation also worthy of the inherent possibilities of lives capacitated for his glory.

Whatever their actual form, the miracles of Jesus are all to be regarded as acted parables of God, illustrations of his love and concern and activity, of his power and will and judgment.

"Greater Works"

But impressive as Christ's miracles are, wide in their range, compelling in their record, unique in their consequences and abiding in their influence, it is open to question if he was ever seen at his highest in respect of them. It is at least certain that he said to his followers, "Greater works than these shall ye do." Which fact suggests that he did not regard the stilling of the storm, the works of healing, the feeding of the multitude, the miraculous catches of fish, and the like, as being the loftiest attainable reach of divine power and human faith. And it is a matter of conjecture, not of irreverent curiosity but of reverent adoration, as to whether the miracles he did not do—of which in the gospels there are hints and even more than hints—because the human conditions of reception were not fulfilled, would not have gone far beyond anything he actually did.

It is clear that more than once he was on the point of doing a miracle but was somehow hindered. And while, in the end, his full and final revelation of God to man in every essential particular was not thereby weakened nor vitiated nor made less than perfect and adequate, the point of the reflection is that if he was hindered then it is possible he may be hindered now. The thought cannot be avoided that if men missed something of what might have been when he companied with them during those eventful years, we too, for similar reasons, may be missing something altogether vital of his creative love and power. If his intention could be thwarted then it may be thwarted now also. Hence nothing can be more important than that we should, with sincere intention, examine ourselves, lest we come to stand to others as some of the men of his earthly day stand to us—just warning illustrations of the Christian miracle that might have been but that did not happen.

For let us have no uncertainty about this. It is only the Christ of miraculous power who is adequate to meet our moral and spiritual need. We may have succeeded, in this enlightened age of ours, in dispelling from our minds many of the shadows of ancient superstitions. And that is a gain. Are we so sure that in accomplishing this we have not also sacrificed the desirable sense of mystery and miracle? It is all to the good that we should be emancipated from the bondage of every false loyalty. But the loss of awe, of reverence, of faith in the God whom Christ revealed, is far from good. It was the glory of his earliest followers that having nothing they yet possessed all things. It is too often our shame that having all things we yet possess nothing.

II.

There is much to search us in even the merest consideration of those occasions, as recorded in the gospels, when he to whom all power was committed was halted in his beneficent intention. And that by causes which even he could not overcome except by invading the realm of human will and thus denying that respect for individual personality which was part of the impulse of his redemptive mission.

There had gathered to him, drawn alike by his personality and his message from their ordinary interests, a great crowd in a desert place. As evening drew on the spell-bound people still lingered. And it became evident that they must either be summarily dismissed to their homes or that some provision for their material needs must be supplied. To his disciples the emergency presented no difficulty. The crowd must be sent away. It needed just a word from Jesus and the people would disperse to meet again on the morrow. So they urged him to do the obvious thing and dismiss them. But the obvious never seems to have any

attraction for him. And when he suggests that a table be spread there and then and entertainment be provided, it is significantly added that while putting to them a question as to the possibility of this, he did so to prove them—"For he himself knew what he would do."

Now what was it that he had in mind? Quite evidently he intended something other than that which subsequently happened. We may be sure he already knew of the presence of the boy whose newly-awakened faith, probably little more at its beginnings than hero-worship, supplied him with the material means of the miracle by which all were ultimately fed and at which all marveled. But it is not necessary for us to assume that he had planned the miracle of multiplying the scanty provision of the boy's own supper just as it happened. Indeed, it appears to have been just an extemporized second best. And the question forces itself as to what he would have done had Philip and the rest not been so wooden in their scarcely-veiled doubt of his sanity. What would have happened? if they had, for instance, said, "Master, it is up to you! We have nothing. It is sheer madness to think that we should be hosts to this hungry company. The thing just can't be done. But you are here! And we know there are no limits to what you can do. And we are here to do your bidding!" Would he, who once refused to turn stones into bread for the relief of his own hunger, have done it then? Or would he have called down manna from heaven? Or would he have summoned a flock of Elijah's ravens, wild birds of the air or rangers of the desert, to bring the needed supplies?

Unbelief and Miracles

What he did was of course an amazing and unprecedented thing. It was a thing which unaided reason cannot fathom and before which humble faith can only adore. For, doing it, he brought the care and power of God right down from the sphere of abstraction and vagueness into active contact with pressing human necessity. And the boy's wondering, admiring, captured confidence furnished him the opportunity. Yet one cannot resist the thought that what happened was obviously not what he first had in mind. Great as was the miracle wrought on the hillside that evening there was possibly a greater, lying in the womb of his purpose, which never came to birth.

Another instance of the same kind happened at Nazareth on his return there after the first announcements of his mission and demonstrations of his power in other parts of the country. Among his own folk he could do no mighty works, no miracles, because of their unbelief. There were, in all likelihood, sick, and leprous, and devil-possessed, and sorrow-burdened, and unburied dead there. It could not be but that the dumbness of their need moved him to pitiful concern. Yet he could do no miracles among them. The inhabitants of that Galilean hill town were not without their traditional religion, their synagogue and its conventional worship. It is more than probable that they were tolerably familiar with the sacred Scriptures which foretold his coming in terms of the nature of his mission. They were acquainted with his kinsmen. They were aware that he had unique powers, unless rumor lied. But the total effect of their attitude was that of closed and shuttered windows toward the sunlight. And he did no miracles there. Men continued to be as selfish, competitive, proud, contentious, money-loving, passion-ridden, self-deceived and self-deceiving as they were before he came into their midst. There was but a short step between them and the life eternal. But it was a step which they and not he must take. And it was not taken.

Jerusalem Misses a Miracle

Toward the end of his brief public life, when the shadow of the cross already rested upon him and the darkness of final rejection was beginning to close in, he uttered what are perhaps the most poignant words which ever fell from his lips. Looking out upon Jerusalem, knowing as only he did what lay beneath its fair and busy exterior, he exclaimed, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not." What a miracle he evidently had in mind had the city's attitude toward him not been alternatively indifferent and angrily hostile!

Imagine an entire city, with all its strange anomalies, its over-fed rich and hungry poor, its thoughtless crowds and sorrow-laden individuals, its busy schemers and playful children, its honored citizens and its criminals, its traders and toilers and triflers, all gathered to him, responsive and obedient to the law of love! How could it ever have been? By what means could he have changed the current of Jerusalem's life, and directed it God-ward and peace-ward? This he did not say. Yet, looking back upon the life by which his words are interpreted we know that, if Jerusalem had but listened to him, he held the secret which would have ended all its woes, its strife, its sin. For he would have told its children very simply and very convincingly how the God with whom they had to do lived not in some faraway heaven, uncaring and unmindful of their state, but was there in their midst, loving, yearning, guiding, ordering their lives by providences directed toward their highest good, seeking their confidence and devotion, pitying and pardoning their sin, opening to them all the gate of life-creating fellowship.

The True Way of Life

He would have taught them, as only he could, that the one true way of life is the way of love. And hearkening to his persuasive affirmations the city would have been saved from the destruction which soon overtook it. The nemesis of God-exiling absorption in those things in its teeming life which contested his rule would have been averted. There indeed was a visioned miracle that did not happen, that, as a matter of fact, has never happened on the scale which he implied as being within his power.

III.

What does all this mean to us? What have these records of the might-have-beens of Christ's day to say to our generation? Just this: that wherever Christ comes to men, and by whatever ministry, the record of his coming is set in terms of opportunity lost or improved. His presence, however we may be made conscious of it, sets up a judgment-seat which none can evade. Before it each must pass every day of his life.

For where he comes it is with the implicit offer of the miraculous to meet the sin-created need of our lives. And how great is the need of something miraculous if we are ever to be saved from those destructive forces which grip and hold us back from the life we sometimes glimpse and occasionally desire, and always know to be our high calling. For, hide it as we may, observing thus the convention of our day, this age, like every other that has preceded it, has a wistful longing for the assurance of spiritual and eternal realities. And what but the miraculous can effect the transformation of alienated affections?

Miracle and Life

What else can change the direction of purposeless drifting? What other power can turn back a Niagara of passion? What but the miraculous can bring to an end imprisoning fear and debilitating uncertainty, and set men's minds and wills to the worship and service of him who made them and is himself the interpreting key to the problems which challenge, and tire, and affright them? What but miraculous power can recreate consciously deteriorated capacities, and rekindle burnt-out enthusiasms, and revitalize outraged loyalties, and resensitize deranged conscience?

When we think and speak of salvation, that great term which is the Bible's entire theme and the church's sole message, it is surely these things that we vision. And it is the sense of personal need that quickens and makes our sight keen. For we know that if only we could enter upon that progressive unfolding of the divine promises which Jesus proclaimed, then life would begin to hold a meaning for us which would invest it with purpose and give a coherence to all its experiences apart from which they lack everything of enduring worth. Then indeed we should be Christian, not merely in conventional designation, but as the actual friends and followers of him who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and left us an example that we should follow his steps in the power of his imparted life.

The Glory of the Gospel

And we may begin to realize all this, here and now. This is surely and preeminently the glory of Christ's gospel. For his power is not exhausted by his earthly record. He is not imprisoned within the sanctities of his own history. He is alive for evermore! He is "the same yesterday and to-day and for ever"! And, if we will, he can do even in our lives, to whatever level of moral unimportance they may have declined, the unprecedented miracle. This, then, the evangel means to us—that he is equal, and more than equal, to our every personal, critical situation. The fact is, if we but hearken to him—as Jerusalem would not; and believe him—as Nazareth did not; and bring the impossible thing in life to him—as the disciples did not—the miracle we individually need will be done. He will readjust our lives to the cleansing, healing, life-giving stream of God's life. And he will so gird us by moral imperative and spiritual enduement that we shall not again stray far from its banks. But it is well for us to lay to heart the certainty that in life, as in war, opportunities do not recur.

IV.

Perhaps the greatest miracle of all those that did not happen in the days when Jesus was here among men, was that to which I have already indirectly referred—the breaking down of the human will in order to create for himself the moral cooperation necessary to the liberation of divine power. Nor in this respect has he changed. In the final reckoning of things every man is captain of his own soul in respect of its creative enlistments and loyalties. Is life, for any one of us, a "might-have-been"? Have we somehow missed the way and lost the tide of an earlier opportunity? For any reason, have we failed to make vital connection with the Christ whose name is often upon our lips but to whose power our lives are strangers? Then the next step is with us. For the first step was with him and he has already taken it. Else had we no concern.

Then why not let him begin to handle life, as his every urgent word declares he is both desirous and competent to do? And why not let him begin to handle it now, lest indifference becomes doubt, and doubt hardens to denial, and denial develops active antagonism? For the end of that process is death. It was one who had himself so learned Christ who distilled from his experience the evangel he sang in these words—

> Come, come to his feet; and lay open your story
> Of sorrow and suffering, of sin and of shame;
> For the pardon of sin is the crown of his glory,
> And the joy of our Lord to be true to his name.

If we do it we shall then go out into the world, under an urgent constraint, no longer wandering casually and aimlessly among the moral obligations of life, but determinedly taking the high road of discipleship and service in the power of an indubitable experience of his abiding companionship and control. And this world of bewildering need in which we live waits, with still suspended judgment, for the witness and effluence of lives in which Jesus Christ reigns as supreme Lord.

You will find your true life—the life eternal, you will come to your proper self-realization, and you will achieve your personally responsible work in the world, in this way and in no other.

How Jesus Dealt with John's Doubt

By James H. Snowden

And the disciples of John told him all these things. And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to the Lord, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? And when the men were coming unto him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? In that hour cured he many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me. Luke 7:18-23.

JOHN THE BAPTIST had been in prison about a year in a lonely fortress known as the Black Tower down by the Dead sea. Jesus was up in Galilee, moving around with a few disciples, preaching. John fell to musing on this situation, and, as a result, a painful doubt began to grow in his mind as to whether Jesus were the Messiah. Several causes produced this doubt. He was in prison and had been there long enough to fall into a prison mood. Hope does not burn brightly there. Why should he be left lying there in useless helplessness? Why did Jesus not take some steps towards obtaining his release? No wonder that in that damp and dusky place the world looked dark to John and that the checkered shadows on the stone walls turned to ghostly specters. This was the state of things inside the prison.

What was the condition of affairs outside? Dark enough in itself to breed doubt. Up in Jerusalem the scribes and Pharisees, the theologians and doctors of divinity, were strangling the life out of religion with their bigotry and hypocrisy. Up in Galilee the court of Herod was living riotously and flaunting its scarlet sins shamelessly before the people. And what was Jesus doing about all this? Apparently nothing: only going about and preaching in fishing towns and country villages. Where were the axe and the fan and fire of judgment that John himself had promised the Messiah would bring? They were not in evidence. On the contrary, Jesus had turned out to be patient, tolerant, mild, genial. He had abandoned Jerusalem and seemed unconcerned about Herod and his court; he had apparently forgotten his forerunner lying in the Black Tower and was content to spend an easy life preaching innocent little sermons to insignificant fisher folk. A genial Christ was not what John wanted: that fiery prophet wanted a Christ that would come with axe and fire to chop things down and burn them up. Under the convergence and pressure of all these facts John himself, who had introduced Jesus and vouched for him, began to doubt whether he were the Messiah. That John doubted Jesus is the astonishing fact that stands conspicuously out in this narrative, and it is an honest book that boldly writes this damaging fact down upon its pages.

I.

Here is the fact that a good man, even a prophet, may fall into doubt. It is often supposed that good men are free from this perplexity and pain. Their faith is thought to be a garment without seam or wrinkle that fits their minds snugly and gives them undisturbed comfort. It would be counted in some quarters a scandal that a minister should be troubled with religious doubt, and shocking to attribute it to an inspired prophet or apostle. Doubt has generally been closely connected with damnation. It has been regarded as a sign of insincerity and dishonesty, or at least of some blameworthy unwillingness in accepting the truth, or as a symptom of some secret sin in the heart. So ecclesiastical authorities have had small patience with it, and have often brusquely and almost brutally branded it as a bad and guilty thing.

Now doubt cannot be considered a good thing as a final state of mind, but it may be good as an early stage in the development of truth. It was a good thing when men began to doubt whether the earth was the center of the solar system, for that doubt was the withering of a great error and the budding of a great truth. It is certainly true that doubt may be an honest state of mind, and therefore it is not always a guilty thing. It may grow out of an unwilling heart or wrong life and is then blameworthy, but it may also grow out of a sincere and earnest desire to know the truth. It is not true that good men are never disturbed with doubt: they are and often painfully so. No thinking mind escapes this shadow: its own light will cast such shadows. The higher up one climbs in thought and even in saintly character, the more may doubt beat against him, as mountain tops are caught in storms that never sweep down upon the plains. It is not surprising, then, that John the Baptist had his doubts about Jesus, and we need not think it strange if at times we are troubled in the same way.

II.

What, now, did John do with his doubt? He did not brood over it until it hatched out the serpents of unbelief and bitterness and hatred of all things good. He did not allow his doubt to destroy his faith in Jesus and he did not break away from him and slip down into careless and hopeless indifference. The man that deals with his doubt in this way is doing an unfair and guilty thing. The fact that a man has doubt is not very important: the important matter is, how is he treating it? He may so deal with it that it will lead him into larger truth and richer life, or so that it may drag him down into indifference and despair.

What did John do with his doubt? He sent to Jesus inquiring, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" He did not consult with his disciples who were bringing him various discouraging reports; much less did he take counsel with the Pharisees, the enemies of Jesus, or with the Sadducees, the agnostics of the day; but he sent directly to Jesus himself and asked him for further light and gave him a further trial. He sought more facts and a closer

James H. Snowden

knowledge of the situation. This is the modern scientific spirit. When scientific men run into doubt in their investigations, as they always do, they do not abandon the field but face its difficulties and search into its facts more closely and thoroughly and thus think their way through to clearer light. This spirit is specially important and fair in personal relations in which when we doubt a man, friend or enemy, we should go to him frankly and give him a fair chance to explain himself. John went to Jesus himself, and this is the right thing to do when we fall into doubt about Christ. Let us go directly to him in study and meditation and prayer that we may get a better understanding of him and be filled with his spirit, and then we shall know of his teaching whether it is of God.

III.

How did Jesus deal with John's doubt? He said to the messengers, "Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard." This is a remarkable answer that blazes out upon the page of the gospel as one of the most splendid sayings in the teaching of Jesus. It contains no adverse judgment upon John or slightest trace of impatience with him for his doubt. Jesus never dealt harshly and unkindly with anyone for doubting him and he will be patient with us if we will only take our doubts to him.

Go and tell John the facts, said Jesus. He did not send word to John that his doubts were damnable and that he should stop thinking and hush them up. This has been a favorite way of dealing with doubt in some quarters. Roman Catholic authorities have been very much afraid of thinking on the part of the people and have tried to discourage it; and Protestants have not been free from the same fear. This spirit bids us beware of troublesome religious questions, distrust our reasoning powers, close our books and strangle our doubts. But this is not the spirit of the Bible which urges us to prove all things, and it is not the call of God whose invitation is, "Come now, and let us reason together." Jesus did not stop John's thinking, and mental death is not the right cure for our doubt.

Jesus Encouraged Doing One's Own Thinking

Neither did Jesus undertake to do John's thinking for him. John's question was, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" Why did not Jesus answer John with a plain and positive yes? Why not relieve John of all responsibility and perplexity in settling this question by settling it for him? Because that was not Christ's way and it is not God's way with us. It is a way that presents plausible pleas and attractions. It seems so plain and easy and conclusive, and it has often been tried. The pope wants to do our religious thinking for us and kindly offers to relieve us of all trouble in the matter, and there are plenty of little Protestant popes who are willing to undertake for us the same business and even try to impose their services upon us uninvited. Why not have the church fix and finish our creed down to the last letter, and then simply accept it on its dogmatic authority? Because our minds will not let us and God does not want us to do this. Christianity is not blind superstition, but a rational religion. God has not given us reasoning faculties and then stifled and stultified them by leaving them no room in which to work; on the contrary, he is ever urging us on into larger use of our reason. God never settles our beliefs for us dogmatically, but he gives us reasons for them and bids us prove them for ourselves.

So on this occasion Jesus said in effect to these disciples, "Go and tell John the facts and let him draw his own conclusion. I shall not answer this question for him categorically, but I suggest to him a line of thought and let him work it out for himself." He did not tell John to do less thinking, but he told him to do more thinking. Jesus was not afraid of reasoning in his disciples: only he wanted them to reason on the basis of facts and sound logic and to reason their way through to right conclusions. And so the way out of our doubt is not to think less until we relapse into mental stagnation and death, but it is to think more until we work our way forward into clearer light and larger truth.

IV.

What were the facts that Jesus submitted to John? "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached unto them." These are works of healing and have on them the marks of moral greatness and of self-evidencing value. They fit into the character and mission of Jesus and are as natural coming out of him as are leaves and blossoms budding out of a tree or as light out of the sun. Such works have been perpetuated down through the centuries and everywhere bear witness to his claims. The character of Christ matches these works. That white Life that grew up out of that hard selfish world must have had a divine root that never was soiled with the sin of earth. His magnificent march through history, the empires of old wrongs he has lifted off their hinges, the moral revolutions he has wrought, the kingdom of brotherhood and love he is establishing, the hearts he is comforting, the souls he is saving, these are mighty works that prove his saviorhood. His sayings are self-certifying truths. They are not arbitrary dogmatic doctrines or abstract speculations, but spiritual laws that work in our lives as Newton's law works in the skies. When all these works are added together and viewed in their cumulative consistency and power they are good proof that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world.

The cure for our doubt is to get closer to these facts, especially to get into fuller sympathy with them and become filled with the spirit of Christ and know him in experience; and as we grow willing to do his will we shall know that he is of God. Thus Jesus trusted this doubt to John's own judgment, and so will he trust us.

V.

"And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me." With these words Jesus closed his answer to John. They imply that we must exercise some patience with Christ, that we cannot fully understand him, that after we have done our profoundest and most sympathetic thinking in relation to him there will still be unexplained remainders that we cannot clear up, that he is bordered with mystery that must ever try and transcend our faith. All our religious thinking must ever be margined and mingled with mystery. It would be a superficial religion that we could fathom; it would be a poor and pitiful God that we could see through. Some things relating to Christ we must take by faith; and some of his ways may ever sorely perplex us. But blessed is he that is not offended on this account, but rather trusts and worships him the more.

Reminder

EACH star that rises and doth fade,
Each bird that sings its song and sleeps,
Each spark of spirit fire that leaps
Within me—of One Flame are made!

John Galsworthy

What Think Ye of Christ?

By John Clarence Petrie

What think ye of Christ? Matthew 22:42.

ONE way in which a liberal preacher might speak on the subject of Jesus would be to take the Athanasian creed, read off some of its metaphysical clauses as to the nature of Christ, and then proceed to puncture the whole thing. It would not be a difficult task. In spite of even our earliest gospel, Mark, being a document written at least forty years after the crucifixion and therefore at a time when the church had already made much advance in the process of deifying Jesus, we know that the gospel we have is not the original Mark and that there is preserved in it much material from a very early period indeed.

The great critics have traced back the process of deification and restored to us a human Jesus whose own claims at most were to being God's Messiah. Then again the preacher might go on to indicate the evils that have flown from the deification. Here were the thousands of heretics burnt at the stake for not being able to say of Christ just what the church taught. There were the cruel laws based not on human need but on the supposed authority of Christ. Again we might cite witchcraft and its persecutions, belief in devils and evil spirits, the interference of the church with scientific advance, all through adherence to a religion based on the authority of the deification.

Pet Theories

There is no question that, old as such a method of preaching is, it still has a thrill in it. Listeners love to hear their own pet theories vindicated and the superstitions of others lashed. But it is questionable if there is to be found much clear religious gain in it. All too many would be encouraged to think less of their neighbors, to scorn their religious beliefs, to have a feeling of religious superiority, merely because of an idea about Jesus at which they had arrived. This sort of thing can create the same attitude one sees in certain orthodox people, that of saying, "I am saved because I belong to the true church," only here it would be, "because I hold the true theology."

But there is still a worse complaint, that such lashing out against the enemy does not bring out the truth. When one has said that Jesus was a first century Jew who taught a spiritual interpretation of Judaism, revolted against priestly errors, incurred the wrath of the powers that be and was executed as a criminal, one has not told the whole truth about him. To say he was mere man is to err against the truth, the mistake lying in the use of the word "mere." To call the one who is the dividing point in all history, the guiding religious spirit of nineteen centuries, the one in whose name men

examine their consciences, purify their lives, broaden their sympathies, is to reduce to the commonplace one who stands by himself.

The truth about Christ is that the truth cannot be spoken. Joseph Fort Newton tells us that "it is the glory of Christmas that it makes known a truth which can never be uttered, but which can only be incarnated and lived." The failure of both orthodoxy and liberalism has been that they have tried for exact logical definitions of the undefinable. They have tried to account for Christ by a theory. One says he is God of God,

JOHN CLARENCE PETRIE

of the substance of the Father as concerns his divinity and of the substance of his mother as concerns his humanity, yet all the while not two but one Christ. The other says he was a first century Jewish teacher. "Nothing spiritual, nothing holy, nothing belonging to the highest order of truth and beauty admits of being defined, and by the very attempt loses its character at once and becomes something else." Thus James Martineau and his words are nowhere more applicable than to questions about Christ. To define him is to turn his religion into a theory, a creed, and to miss him, the real Jesus. What was in Jesus cannot be confined and limited within the bounds of a definition. There is in him what is universal, infinite, and in nothing is he more godlike than in his immunity to theorizing.

Living Experience the Key

If we turn to the language of St. Paul or the author of St. John's gospel, we find the glowing words of religious devotion, words, the symbols of man's thought, trying to express something which actually cannot be expressed but only felt, lived, incarnated. John Wesley was exactly right when he insisted upon the experience known as "conversion" for his followers. No man has a right to utter the words of St. Paul, "I live now, no longer I, but Christ liveth in me," except he speak from a living experience. No man should dare say that he that sees Jesus sees the Father unless he has had the experience of finding God through the human Christ. To say glibly in terms of a creed, "Jesus is God and unless you believe that, you cannot be saved," is to rob the fervent faith of St. John of all its meaning. It is to turn the spiritual religion of Jesus into a religion of external authority. It is to lay upon the sinless Jesus the guilt for all the blood of the heretics who suffered fagot and stake in the interests of credalism. No man can say Jesus is Lord except by the Spirit of God; that is, unless he can live out in his own life the principles lived and taught by the Nazarene he has no way of knowing who Jesus was.

We are told in the fourth gospel that when Jesus described himself as the bread of life, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. "Jesus said, therefore, unto the twelve, Would ye also go away? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." I believe that the evangelist is here preserving the remnant of an actual historical occurrence in the life of Jesus. It is certainly entirely in keeping with the synoptic Christ that he should have asked this question, "Will ye also go away?" and in keeping with the tradition of what Peter was like that he should have been the one to speak up and say, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." In the earlier gospels we have it said that the people in the synagogue at Nazareth were astonished at the gracious words that he spoke. After the sermon on the mount it is reported that men marveled, saying that Jesus spoke as one having authority and not as the scribes—from mere tradition.

The Creed of Deeds

Who was Jesus? How shall we define him? To these questions there is no answer that will not do him an injustice and corrupt his religion. To one who has tried to follow him there can be no question but that from him proceed the words of eternal life. But his words lose their meaning when put into theological form and are recited as a creed. To say, "Lord, Lord," is to miss the meaning of his life. Who was he? In words of cool logic I do not know. I only know that to follow him is to find God, to find a meaning in life, to be made whole. Intellectually speaking, we still see as through a glass darkly. To the question, Who is he? there is no sure answer here and now—and rightly so, because he came to give us religion to live, not a theology to dispute about. If we will own his sway we shall already here taste eternal life, and in the world to come those questions which defeat the intellect here may find at last their answer.

Meantime we still look abroad for a church that will teach only a religion of the spirit, a church dreamed of by the poet:

A mightier church shall rise whose covenant word
Shall be the deeds of love. Not CREDO then—
AMO shall be the password through its gates.
Man shall not ask his brother any more,
"Believest thou?" but, "Lovest thou?" and all
Shall answer at God's altar, "Lord, I love."
For Hope may anchor, Faith may steer, but Love,
Great Love alone, is captain of the soul.

"Be Not Anxious"

BY HOWARD CHANDLER ROBBINS

Take no thought for the morrow. Matthew 6:34.

THAT text is as the King James version translates it. The Revised version is more accurate—"Be not anxious." Anxiety, not forethought, is the forbidden thing. Anxiety is not the equivalent of forethought: far from it. More often it is its greatest enemy. It pours sand into the delicate machinery of the mind. It makes our thoughts grind against each other, and run slowly and heavily, so that we cannot make good plans. Anxiety is another name for worry, and the old Saxon word worry, or "wurgen," carries an ugly picture of a wolf catching a sheep by the throat. Worry does that. Worry strangles.

The Way to Serenity

In the first place, worry strangles our efficiency. Tests in laboratories of experimental psychology have demonstrated that a man can do more work and do it with less fatigue, he can run a faster race, work longer hours, lift a heavier weight, think, compute and reason more rapidly and more accurately when he is free from care than when he is in a state of discouragement or of apprehension. If you go to the athletic fields of any of our colleges, you will find that records have been made in practice, with no one but the trainer standing by, which were not equaled at the subsequent public contest. When the athlete was alone, he was not worrying, and so he did his best with splendid ease. People who have been in accidents or who have had other experiences of acute fear sometimes describe their sensations as though they had felt a dreadful clutching at the heart. In a milder way, all anxiety is that. It is a condition of sub-acute fear, the effects of which upon the body and mind are altogether harmful. It is a wolf at the throat of our efficiency.

In the second place, worry strangles our serenity. No anxious person, no one who is living in a state of suspense, can be enjoying peace of mind. How much it means to be blessed by nature with a cheerful disposition! It means that as one goes along the path of life, one is missing none of its good. It means exhilaration in out-of-door life! natural pleasure in changing of the weather or the seasons. It means enjoyment in human contacts and relationships, and satisfaction in simple pleasures. We cannot define cheerfulness very closely because it is more like a bright atmosphere than like anything more tangible. It pervades the mind like an inward light in which things are seen bathed in beauty and serenity. But worry is the exact opposite of all this. Worry settles down like a fog, blotting out beauty and meaning, and spreading to those who have the misfortune to be associated with the victims of it. "A merry heart doeth good like medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones."

Now anxiety is of many sorts, and is due to a variety of causes. In some cases, for instance, it is temperamental. Just as there are some persons who are cheerful by temperament, so there are others who are temperamentally anxious. But defects in temperament are not things to which we are obliged to succumb without an effort. Defects in temperament are handicaps which we are given to overcome. The difficulty is that when anxiety has been allowed to become chronic, indulgence in it will be found to have weakened the will. It has tethered the mind, allowing it to range in circles, instead of pressing forward to solutions; and the will has become debilitated in consequence. Nine out of ten persons who are counseled not to worry make the same answer, "I can't help it." No, they can't help it yet, but they can put themselves in the way of being ultimately able to help it. The re-education of the will is something which today, with our growing knowledge of psychology, can be undertaken with every prospect of success. Generally the first steps must be taken upon the physical side. The body must be trained to obey the will unhesitatingly. A course of physical exercises is often of benefit. Fresh air, brisk walking, deep breathing—all such things help. Wood-carving, or some similar occupation with the hands, is good for those who have not developed manual dexterity. Some sort of discipline is essential. The work of the day should be worked out in advance, and the plans made should be rigidly adhered to. Decisions once made should be followed up at once by some appropriate action. "What thou doest, do quickly," said Jesus. He was speaking to a man who had made up his mind to do wrong. How much more strongly the advice holds in the case of those who have made up their minds to do right! "What thou doest, do quickly." When you make up your mind to write a letter, sit down and write it. When you decide to make a call, make it. Do quickly what thou doest. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.

Prayer and the Will

But while the body is being refreshed by rest and discipline by exercise and taught to obey promptly and without hesitation the mandates of the will, it must be remembered that the end in view is the control of the mind. And so it is well to begin at the earliest opportunity the systematic discipline of the mind. Our thoughts are like wild horses, wild horses galloping masterless over the prairies, until we begin in a serious and methodical way the work of controlling and breaking them in for harness. But that is our work in the world—that is almost the most important thing

that we are planted in this world to accomplish—to govern our thoughts, to bring every thought and imagination under the control of a kind and firm and vigorous Christian will. How to do it, that is the problem.

One answer to that problem is prayer. Nothing else so enables concentration. Nothing else so reinforces and invigorates the will. Short periods of quiet meditation at the beginning and end of every day: that sounds as simple and as easy as the advice to Naaman

Howard Chandler Robbins

to dip in the water of Jordan. But in our case, as in his, we shall find that it is the simplest remedies that heal.

When anxiety comes, as it often does, from narrow interests, from being absorbed in too limited a sphere, the interests should be widened. The American business man is rarely lazy: much more often he is too absorbed in his work, and his over-absorption in it, to the neglect of other interests, is the reason for many breakdowns in middle life, when men should be at their prime of efficiency and happiness. Such men need, when the work of the day is over, to stop thinking about their work. They need to give themselves to some entirely different interest and pursuit. The advice of some nerve specialists to them is to cultivate a hobby. It may be book collecting or it may be gardening; it may be the study of American history, or it may be trout fishing: what form it takes matters less than that it shall be sufficiently distracting to induce a complete change of mind. A field cannot be planted with the same crop year after year without becoming impoverished. Neither can a mind be filled with the same thoughts day after day without becoming jaded. Each man must have his sabbatical rests, when part of his brain is lying fallow, while other and neglected parts are being seeded down by fresh ideas.

The Curse of Selfishness

A third cause of anxiety is selfishness: undue love of ease and luxury, undue fear of poverty and pain. This is much in evidence at the present time. The luxuries of a past generation have become the necessities of this. Pain is endured with less fortitude. Relief is sought in narcotics which establish a tyrannical hold, and eventually drag their victims down to torments far worse than those which they temporarily relieve. And beside the undue fear of pain we must place the undue fear of poverty. The luxuriousness of the times is grimly punished by nature in ways which we are often slow to note. For one thing, young men and young women are led to defer marriage through fear of poverty, and that is unfortunate, for marriages made reasonably early, before people are set in their ways, hold the best promise of happiness and of permanence. We need the spirit of pioneers among us, a pioneer willingness to begin at the bottom, to face the world unaided and unafraid. If there is not enough room in the city, the country is not crowded, and far out in the northwest of the United States and of Canada great undeveloped tracts are waiting for those who have the mettle and determination that our forefathers had.

In the last place, there is a form of anxiety which is not temperamental, which is not selfish, which proceeds from no ignoble cause whatever: the anxiety of which solicitude for loved ones is the root. Some of the most anxious people we know are people who are utterly unselfish: fathers and husbands who do not waste an anxious thought upon their own personal needs, but who realize that others are dependent upon their labors, and who think with anxiety of the future of their families; or mothers who have contended with poverty and sickness for their children's lives, and who have fought so long that anxiety concerning them has become a kind of second nature. What about these people whose anxiety is so different from the other types that we have been considering, so different and so much more generous?

"Your Heavenly Father"

It is these, I think, that our Savior specifically had in mind, in the preaching of the Sermon on the Mount concerning anxiety, because it was among such as these that he lived, among such as these that he had his friends, and from among such as these that he called his first disciples. Our Lord's life was lived for the most part among the toiling, simple-hearted poor, where care for physical subsistence is a pressing anxiety, and where care for the morrow is stamped on almost every brow. And there is a great tenderness, a great understanding and a great sympathy in the words in which he addresses them, bidding them, too, to lay anxiety aside, not to live in fearful suspense, not to be of a foreboding disposition.

His cure for unselfish anxiety is trust in God. Over and over again he calls God, Father, "your heavenly

Father": Father is Christ's only name for God. Over and over again he assures his people of the love and care of God. They are to trust that love, for themselves and for their loved ones. They are to commit themselves and their loved ones unreservedly to that care. Jesus teaches his disciples that trust is the secret of all happiness and of all true safety. He teaches us all to throw ourselves upon God's protection with the innocent abandonment of children. He points out to us as our example the fowls of the air, the flowers of the field, that fulfill the laws of their existence and repose without a care on the bosom of creation's God. Shall we who are of more value than many sparrows fail to trust him as implicitly? "Your heavenly Father." If he is indeed our Father, then he must be trusted as a Father is trusted. There must be an end of worry, an end of careful suspense. In spite of all difficulties we are in the providence of God, we are to believe that he does love, that he does care, that he does guide and overrule, that no soul escapes his tender vigilance, that our human love is only a pale reflection of his love, and our wisest foresight not even a far off approximation of his infinite wisdom. That is the lesson of the Sermon on the Mount. That is the cure for every worldly care to which the gospel invites all burdened souls.

For Labor Sunday

The Day and the Work

TO each man is given a day and his work for the day;
And once, and no more, he is given to travel this way.
And woe if he flies from the task, whatever the odds;
For the task is appointed to him on the scroll of the gods.

There is waiting a work where only your hands can avail;
And so, if you falter, a chord in the music will fail.
We may laugh to this sky, we may lie for an hour in the sun;
But we dare not go hence till the labor appointed is done.

To each man is given a marble to carve for the wall;
A stone that is needed to heighten the beauty of all;
And only his soul has the magic to give it a grace;
And only his hands have the cunning to put it in place.

We are given one hour to parley and struggle with Fate,
Our wild hearts filled with the dream, our brains with the high debate.
It is given to look on life once, and once only to die:
One testing, and then at a sign we go out of the sky.

Yes, the task is given to each man, no other can do;
So your work is awaiting: it has waited through ages for you.

Edwin Markham.

Aristocrats of Labor

THEY claim no guard of heraldry,
They scorn the knightly rod;
Their coats of arms are noble deeds,
Their peerage is from God!

W. Stewart.

Labor Day Prayer

By Dilworth Lupton

O GOD, Thou who art the Master Workman of the world, we pray that there may come to us a new sense of the dignity of labor, a consciousness that in the handiwork of all crafts is the very essence of prayer.

We ask that our own work, however great or however petty, may be lifted to a new level of spiritual worth; that we may labor not as beasts of burden, but as sons worthy of Thy name, toiling earnestly and with a song in our hearts.

May we reverence also the work of others—the labor of mighty minds shaping the destinies of vast business enterprises and of great nations; the men and women in factories; the mighty army of toilers who plant and harvest that we may eat, who hew timber that we may have shelter; the host of workers who man our railways and protect our dwellings by day and by night.

We pray for a new industrial idealism. We pray that men in high places increasingly may labor, not so much for their own aggrandizement as for the welfare of others. We rejoice in the awakening of the masses to a new freedom and a new power. But may they too feel a divine sense of stewardship. May none seek to be masters; may all of us be partners in the divine work of maintaining the fabric of the world. Amen.

The Gospel of Labor

THIS is the Gospel of Labor—
Ring it, ye bells of the kirk —
The Lord of love came down from above
To live with the men who work.
This is the rose that he planted
Here in the thorn-cursed soil—
Heaven is blessed with perfect rest;
But the blessing of earth is toil.

Henry van Dyke.

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

DURING the past month I have been in a world whose chief events are a sunset on the mountains, a rainfall, a golf score, a hike up a mountain trail to a stilly lake, a leisurely walk with a friend, a full night's sleep under two or three blankets while the rest of the country sweltered, a book, an uninterrupted visit with my family, building a morning and evening fire in a sheet iron stove, chopping a daily armful of wood with a nice sharp axe, a Sunday service with a good sermon by a Methodist, Presbyterian or Lutheran preacher, and the weekly arrival of The Christian Century! Thus cut off from first hand contact with the world of great events, my vacation seems to me the great event of this month! I am in Estes Park, Colorado, at the Y. M. C. A. camp, living in one of their half-wood, half-canvass cottages and taking advantage of the rare facilities for comfort, recreation, inspiration and rest which have been developed here. I learn from Governor Sweet, who presides over this enterprise, that plans are afoot to widen the scope of next year's program by inviting many other organizations, both churchly and educational, to hold their conventions and summer schools here. There must be as many as fifty cottages in the camp, with an attractive cafeteria, an administration building, including a spacious public lounge, and a large assembly hall seating 700 or 800 people, at the center, and the everlasting hills, topped by Long's Peak, all around. My best wish for my fellow ministers is that they too may have enjoyed a restful vacation and that they return to their tasks feeling as fit for a full year's work as I do!

The Book of the Month

RELIGION COMING OF AGE, *by Roy Wood Sellars. The Macmillan Company.* $2.50.

I, FOR one, am grateful for every book that is being written with the purpose of breaking up the traditional framework of religious faith. Whether these books are frankly cynical, like the works of Leuba, or despairing, like the writings of Lippmann and Krutch, or whether they affect to cling to religion while emptying it of its distinctive content, like Haydon and Sellars, they all help to clear the ground and compel religious thought to make a new start. It is clear to me, as I think it is to most people who are at all aware of the revolution now well under way in science and philosophy, that the old framework of religious faith cannot last much longer. Note that I say "framework." It is my conviction that the spiritual essentials of the Christian tradition are not endangered by any fate that may overtake the forms in which the tradition has come down to us. Professor Sellars, to my notion, in shattering these ancient thought-forms, allows the spiritual essentials which they contain to escape, and he does not recover them again in the framework of his own system. But I commend the scholarship and constructive purpose of his book, which I would characterize as the most readable and helpful interpretation of present day philosophy that I have come upon. Sellars clears the ground for a new start in religious thought, but he seems unable to discover the trail that opens into a new ascent.

A Thought for the Month

SENSITIVE observers of the trend in modern religion are aware of something like a breakdown of religion in the sphere of personal experience. The disfavor into which revivalism has fallen, the displacement of conversion by religious education, the passing of the habit of prayer in the home and in private devotion, the elaboration of ritual in public worship, the emphasis upon the social gospel—these are but a few of many tokens that the focus of religion is being shifted from the inner life of individual men and women to a wider and more impersonal scene. Those of us who hold to the evangelical content of Christianity cannot contemplate this change without genuine concern. After all, the supreme thing in this world is personality. And it is Christianity's distinction that, no matter how wide a circle it compasses, it comes back at last to the inner life of persons. There are those who lay the blame for the decline of the personal gospel upon our present day preoccupation with the social gospel. I do not share in this judgment. Rather, it seems to me that the personal gospel has been, for the moment, arrested until the authority of Christ has demonstrated itself in the wider sphere of man's social life. Christianity has never given Christ a chance to show whether his gospel really applies to the world of industry and commerce and politics, of race relations and international relations—in a word, to the very texture of that society in which every individual soul lives and has its being. The result is that there is widespread skepticism, even among Christians, as to the universality of the principles of life which Christ taught and by which he lived. Now, the modern mind cannot take seriously any principle of life which is limited in its application to only one aspect of life. If the nature of the social order is such that the mind of Christ is inapplicable to it; if Christ is incapable of transforming the kingdoms of this world into his Kingdom, we may be sure that his authority in our inner life will steadily fade away. It is my belief that the revitalizing of religion, as a personal experience, will take place only when the Christian church so presents the Christian gospel to the world of so-called secular affairs that Christ can demonstrate as true our evangelical conviction that all authority in heaven and on earth has been committed unto him.

Charles Clayton Morrison

COMPANIONS!

The Christian Century

($4.00 a Year)

A weekly journal of opinion—religious — undenominational — interdenominational — challenging — alert — independent — progressive — thought-provoking — stimulating.

"I await its arrival each week with eager interest. I recommend it to all who would be abreast of the times. It will break up fallow ground in every honest mind, lead to courageous thinking, and materially assist in understanding the times in which we live."

The Christian Century Pulpit

($2.00 a Year)

Monthly — devoted exclusively to sermons — voices great and small — **72** a year — purpose: to bring inspiration to the preacher; to elevate the standard of preaching throughout Protestantism.

"It has already proven its right to a place on the desk of every preacher in the land. A worthy companion to The Christian Century."

SPECIAL COMBINATION SUBSCRIPTION PRICE
(To Ministers only) **$4.00**

USE THE COUPON BELOW

Christian Century Pulpit Subscription Order Coupon

The Christian Century Pulpit,
440 So. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Please enter my name as a subscriber to The Christian Century Pulpit for one year. I am not a present subscriber to The Christian Century.

☐ I enclose $2.00 herewith.
☐ I will remit $2.00 on receipt of bill.

My name—Rev.....

Address... .....

[Christian Century Subscribers remit only $1]

Combination Subscription Order Coupon

The Christian Century Pulpit,
440 So. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen:

Please enter my name as a subscriber to The Christian Century and The Christian Century Pulpit for one year. For my convenience will you please see that both subscriptions start at the same time?

☐ I enclose $4.00 herewith.
☐ I will remit $4.00 on receipt of bill.

My name—Rev.....

Address... .....

Book Order Coupon

The Christian Century Pulpit,
440 So. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen:

Please send me a copy of
RELIGION COMING OF AGE

☐ I enclose $2.50 herewith.
☐ Charge to my account and send me bill. I will remit promptly.

My Name.....

Address... .....

☐ Please send me, without charge, you September issue of the "Book Service Broadcast."